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ABSTRACT

This paper contends that visual aesthetic education (VAE) is intended for all and ought to be granted to adolescents capable of autonomous criticism and vocational clarification by the age of 15. The paper introduces VAE's essential concepts and historical developments. The paper identifies and elaborates nine challenges facing VAE. Contains a 10-item reference bibliography. (BT)

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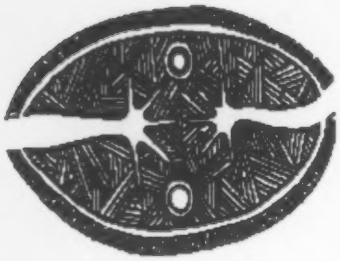

InSEA

"Key Cultural Questions of Visual Aesthetic Education Progress or Reduction in the 3rd Millenium"

by

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KEY CULTURAL QUESTIONS OF VISUAL AESTHETIC EDUCATION PROGRESS OR REDUCTION IN THE 3RD MILLENIUM

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Introduction

This Congress reflects about *Art Education* related to *Cultures and Transitions*. In old times, metaphores standing for *Education* were *gardening* or *regulating* for precision. In the 80's, it was seen in computig terms of *in-put/out-put* or as *climbing* a mountain (Taylor, W., 80's). We think that ***discovery voyage*** may be a most appropriate metaphore for todays human learning, either as global *flying* along the cyberspace, or *diving* into people 's being/creation.
We can have an image of this from the 500 year old Portuguese experience of need, effort and pleasure of discovering the unknown and understanding other people , looking at the animation drawing by J. Silva's 6th Grade pupils, *D. Vasco da Gama em mares misteriosos*,1996.
The **pre-requirements** for such an educational voyage, more over in the art education field – which comprehends reason/emotion/interaction – in our view, remain the same as pointed out by M. Bubber, C. Rogers, I. Illich, C. Freinet or P. Freire, to become a person, dialoguing around and being creative: freedom of symbolic expression, being secure that if someone's achievement is under criticism, he/she is always accepted as a person; listening to the other; reaching readiness for autonomous decision instead of remaining dependent. In short, assuming that **educating** leads to freedom and buids up the ***teleanthropos' society*** (Pimenta, E.,1999), called a society of ***wisdom sharing and friendship*** (Levy, P., 1994: Rodrigues F., 1994). This openess of mind/action, which is at the very root of all cultural transition/ development, that was celebrated in the Lisboa 98 World Exibition, we find it here, in the Nepal Pagoda place from the 88 World Exhibition and its Peace appeal: in the aboriginal voice being present everywhere...in diversity at the present 17ys olds' *Excellence-in-Art Competition*; or the 1999 *Young Interpreters' Prize*, just prizing innovation (17 ys old Percussionist C. Edwards).

Factors which have broaden VAE (Visual Aesthetic Education), sense and integral/ cultural accomplishment

As stated at the Research Conference, this is our view of some essential **conceps:**
VAE is intended for all and ought to be granted up to the adolescents being capable of autonomous criticism and vocational clarification (by the age of 15). It is expected that the young persons had developed a self development system for VAE along life.
Artistic Education is intended for the vocational education of the professional artists.
Aesthetics is defined as orientation of (each person's) energy for quality (as *qualia* = character), while recreating or appreciating form.
In our research (Oliveira, E., 1997), we verified that VAE can – and must – reach, in its didactic units, the following **three dimensions & three functions:**
Material dimension-**Technological** function / **Social** dimension-**Communicative** function /**Ontological** dimension-**Life-Organizing** function.
Imagination is the most crucial factor in VAE development: *To give sense to the unknown* (Warnock, M., 1976).
Taking the Portuguese experience as a referential of a Country that developed itself from cultural dictatorship into freedom of expression/democracy,
between 1936 and 1999, we were able to categorize the following:

SIX RELEVANT VAE DEVELOPMENTS

Notes: Detailled approach: Oliveira, E. (1996). *Drawing* in the National Curriculum since 1860.

1936 - 1947/8 - Pro-Imagination: some freedom in *decoration composition or within rigid geometric frameworks /forms*

1947/8 – 1970 - Education through art: *Free Drawing* in the curriculum since 1948, by A. Betamio de Almeida. *Escolinha de Arte* since1949, by C. Menano, under A. Rodrigues. 1st Children Expression exhibition of an *open-mind*, as compared with official indoctinating exhibitions, in 1951, by L. Correia, sponsored by C. Gulbenkian Foundation. 1957, foundation of APEA (Portuguese Association for Education through Art), under H. Read´s influence. In the 60's, Martins da Costa's pionneer projects in basic visual education open to the environment and exhibited to all school.

1970-1974 – Formal: Image/Communication/Design coming into focus (Bauhaus' influence).

1974-1975 – Cultural-Communicative (Transition syllabus to adequate education to the free expression spirit of the Portuguese peaceful revolution of the 25th of April, 1974- from dictatorship into democracy.Visual Education was already in this way, needing little change): Project, on cultural heritage and evironment usefulness.

1975-1990 – Integrated/Environmental: Fusion of the two previous 3rd Cycle (ages 12 -15) School streams, the more elitist Lyceum and the Industial School: creation of a Vocational option – *Art/Design* – beyond the *Visual Education* for all; and of 3 disciplines beyond *Descriptive Geometry*, in Secondary School (ages 15-18), in Design, Expression Technologies and Art History. Integrated projects applying to environment needs (in school and outside of it) and cultural purposes, with influence from the *Art and the Built Environment Project* (RCA/UK). Creation of the CAI (Artistic Child Center)/C. Gulbenfian Foundation, a model for infant/ School, in 1984; and foundation of APECV (Ass. of Visual Expression and Communication Teachers, InSEA member) in 1988.

1990 - - Functional/Technological: Emphasis in tecchnological mediated experiences, multimedia facilities being introduced from the Basic Education 2nd Cycle onwards (ages 10-12) in all Portuguese schools, on one side; and body mediated experiences, approximating performance/drama, on the other side. Since 1990: Basic compulsory education extended from the age of 12 to 15, including *Visual Education* for all; and *Music* or *Technology* take the place of the Vocational *Art/Design*. National essays in Curriculum flexibility since 1997, are to be generalized in 2001.

In short, we can point out that the **main factors of VAE improvement** were developments in: **Imagination; democratic freedom of expression; awareness of cultural heritage; social intervention in bettering environment quality of life-cooperation/integration; communication through new technologies; vocation challenge, continuous change-innovation.**

A sample of **good VAE practices** shows you the quality of the **school projects** implemented by the teachers-in-Education, 1st year, from our classes of VAE Didactics in the 90's. All these teachers are licenced in Art or Design, coming into a 2 years Professional training at the Faculty of Education, while already conducting classes (ages: 12-18ys) in the Lisboa District:

T M J Velhinho's **drawing exploration/intervention in local environment** - market (12ys)

M C Filipe's **creation (modulation/colour)** departing from Roman mosaics in Portugal (12ys)

P Carpinteiro's **creation of masks,** studying face expression and as a starting point for a drama play by the pupils, in groups autonomously mentored by previously trained pupils (12 ys)

L Garlito's ***Painting the School***: from studies of contemporary mural to model and exhibition, in problem solving applied to the school environment; and another Teacher's exploration of **mural and other forms of public contemporary art**, in Lisboa underground stations (15 ys)

J Morgado's ***Performance***, applying this technique shown in a street event, in pupils' interpretations of art styles at a school exhibition of reproductions of paintings by them (16 ys)

Armindo S's ***Prisoners of Art***: pupils' performance while exhibiting their paintings at a museum, engaging all the local community; and R Moutinho's ***Egypt, an art for eternity***, all study of Egyptian art finishing in a study visit and *Egyptian* play at the Louvre pyramid (17ys).

To motivate their pupils to create such projects, the teachers research art form and create visual aids through video, power-point oroverhead-projection... as in the two following samples: A Barata and E Gonçalves group's study of **movement/rhythm** in 98 Lisboa World Exhibition; and Pizarro group's exploration of ***deforming***, from realism to abstraction in art works.

Tensions and challenges stressing for VAE Development or Reduction

The usefulness of VAE for its visual language not needing translation; its record/display techniques and project methodology serving as a tool for the other subjects; its work applying broadly to bettering life quality in school and the outside environment; and, first of all, giving place to each person's and culture's expressiveness, raises problems about its place in the curriculum and the corresponding teacher education. We identify the following **VAE Challenges**:

CHALLENGE 1: VAE specific structured approach vs. interdisciplinary approach
The on-going educational reform stressing for **flexibility in the curriculum**, in Portugal, has attempted – without success - to stop **VAE for all** at the age of 12, becoming an optional subject after that, and being experienced by all through the interdisciplinary *Project* only to the end of compulsory education, at 15. This trend of VAE reduction is bein felt in many countries. Is VAE an experience of a cross-disciplines nature?... a tool for all subjectrs, without a specific structured approach of its own? And if such a structured approach exists, can it be completed at the age of 12?
Answering this question is crucial for **peoples/country/world visual litteracy and culture.**
We answer *no:* ***VAE* needs to be explored systematically in a discipline, in its own right, up to the adolescent's criticism autonomy** (age of 15) **and vocational clarification.**
We consider that the following **VAE structure nucleus** may be found evident and are necessary in basic education for all, till adolescence (Oliveira, E. 1999):

VAE Methodology/Activities:	**Visual Contents:**
Visual Investigation	**Aesthetic Qualities/Visual Language**
Visual Record	**Communication/Graphics**
Interpretation/expression (process/product meaning; criticism)	**Form-Function** (poetic form/design)
Project (unconstrained expression/design), Incl. **dessimination of experience & self/ hetero-evaluation** of the whole VAE process	**Visual Culture Heritage** (nat/intern.)
	Visual Technologies/Multimedia
	Sharing/global experience dimensions

CHALLENGE 2: VAE role/place in an integral (mainly *basic*, but also *life long*) **education**
If the curriculum is (well) becoming increasingly under the teacher responsibility/accountability - in Portugal and other countries – why and how VAE needs to be granted for an inte- gral basic educaion for all (up to the age of 15), at an efficient level?
It is coming into generalized awareness that VAE is crucial to bring emotion/reason and action interaction into the pupil's reconstruction of curriculum experience, mobilizing the ***three brains*** – cortex (rationality), limbic (emotion) and reptilean (impulse); developing both **halfs of the brain**, mainly the usually underdeveloped right side; and to stimulate **lateral thinking** which is most required to cope with the unknown, in discovery and innovation, when the sequenced learning in vertical thinking becomes unfeasable. Nevertheless, the priorities of economic, technological and verbal language communication upon the curriculum have been so overwhelming that it is ubalanced to the point of VAE and other *Expressions* being discarded from the core-curriculum at the age of 12 - as appears to be the case in Australia. P. Bourdieu quoted by the Portuguese Association Abril em Maio, in 1998, warns: *It would be already not bad if "integrated " intelectuals absteined themselves of becoming accomplices and collaborating with the forces which endanger their own existence bases and freedom, which are the marketting forces.*
We support VAE as a condition in ballancing an integral core-curriculum (up to 15 ys), much in the sense of the Ministers Council's Resolution on Education and Formation Along Life from 1998 that, *to transform information into knowledge (...) it is not enough to master technologies but it is also required to understand why and for what.* This, *implies the implementation of an interrogative attitude facing life and work, stimulating the spitit of no accommodation, a purpose for which the Arts, being a sensitive and subjective means of understanding and organizing the real, must have a crucial role.*
Seeing - a VAE essential development - is also considered fundamental for science, in Einstein and Hadamard's testemonies about their way of thinking; and Poincaré considers the intervention of the beauty sense to be required for discovery. (Ghiselin, B. 1952)
Countries as the UK had a long experience of curriculum flexibility and have come to the need of central recommendations (boundaries, profile and competence lists...). Government Edu-

cational Services are changing their role into a facilitator one but, beyond providing means, they must assume the risponsability of ensuring a ballanced core-curriculum for all. And contribute for the **space** and **time required in pupils and teachers' timetables** to enable them to meet, discuss, decide, implement, evaluate and disseminate their school projects.
The following three Challenges may be derived from this 2nd one.

CHALLENGE 3: Room for clarification/accomplishment of Artistic vocation at school.
If VAE is discarded from the core-curriculum at the age of 12, while other disciplines are emphasized in this core-curriculum, there is a discrimination procedure leading to the pupils' underestimation of the (visual) cultural side of life; removing them from professions so socially essential nowadays as architectute/design (urbananization, fashion, graphics, equipment...), multimedia communication; or self-fulfilling as painting, sculpture or performance; and reducing these pupils' present and future quality of life/choice, when *everithing goes* in the media.
Most students do not get entered in a course of their choice. Most professions require reconversion, from the initial into unexpected functions, frequently removed from that beginning.
Is this the end of **Vocations**? We think that peoples discover themselves more inclined for some activities than for others, and **they should be given the opportunity of self-fulfillement through the kind of work that suits them the best, if such a** (visual) **profession remains socially relevant** (...more than 75% of the information still coming in visual form).

CHALLENGE 4: Role/Place of the *Expressions* in the whole core-curriculum
For reasons parallel to those approached in the previous Challenges 1, 2 and 3, **the arts experience related to the senses other than the sight**, safegarding that this one accounts for most of the perception, **must be initiated at the basic education for all, in *Music*, *Drama*** and ***Dance*, leadind to some modern professions and enriching sensitivity and leisure.**
Integrated projects until the Basic Sch. 1st Cycle, Area projects in the 2nd Cycle; and joint interdisciplinary projects from the 3rd Cycle onwards, should be systematically promoted.

CHALLENGE 5: Role/Place of (Visual)*Technologies* in the whole core-curriculum
We think that, in the 2nd and 3rd Cycles (ages 10-15), the **technologies should be well establishet in eveyone's curriculum** (probably starting already through play; since the age of four). And **each discipline should assume its own technologies**, instead of the technologies being a separate subject and each discipline empting itself from technologies that always have been a strong component of it – the material dimension, of a technological function, in the VAE case.
Where this technological approach is not properly solved, difficult problems may arise, with overlapping and even contradictory experiences, many times complicated by teachers' difficulty in clearly understanding their space and action boundaries.
Actual relevance of teaching requires a permanent reconsideration of **what technologies stay or become a must in every pupil's experience**, This is **a cultural crucial decision**, requiring deep knowledge into local/cultural identity and needs/global society's demands.
Leaving any of these needs unattended may cause serious social/cultural exclusion.

CHALLENGE 6: Generality level in VAE approach, according w/ pupils' age
To understand when **integrated, area, discipline** or **interdisciplinary** approaches are adequate, is a matter under discussion – one to be considered at the N. Y. International Art reflection of 99/11/11-13 on the future of Arts Education, by educators and artists.
Again, in function of human and cultural social developments, a decision needs to be made of up where to guide the pupils, avoiding childish or autoritarian standards, taking into consideration the diversity of their potentialities/capabilities and social expectations.
Taking into consideration the pupils' level of development, interests and social integration, we think that the following are **adequate levels of VAE approach** (Refer,: Portuguese System):

Integrated approach, according with children's interests broadened by teacher's stimulation:
-In pre-school(3-5/6 ys) and Basic School 1st Cycle (6-10 ys)
Area approach (group of/joint/merged disciplines) + Interdisciplinary Project (A group of pupils' choice of concrete cross-disciplines work, mentored by some teachers, +/- 3h/w):
-In Basic School 2nd Cycle (10-12 ys)
Discipline approach + Interdisciplinary Project (As above):
-In Basic School 3rd Cycle (12-15 ys) – Compulsory education end; & Secondary Education

(15-18 ys) for those engaging in preparation for Higher Art Studies or for Art Professions.

CHALLENGE 7: Teacher type and Teacher Education type, correspponding to the VAE approaches considered in Challenge 6
Teachers must be graduated at Licence level, at least, for any level of VAE approaches. This has been a recent decision in Portugal, implying upgrading of Pre-School and Basic School 1st Cycle teachers' qualifications; but we think that the complexity of their tasks very much requires this qualification level being achieved. The problem is to decide the teachers' balance of Art (and other subjects, eventually) studies and Education studies. This relates with teacher's vocation and the crucial point – if such a point exists – at which a more structured experience and knowledge building has to occur. It counts Country+Media developm. diversity. In a parallel w/ the levels at 6), above, we suggest the following teacher types, to which Teacher Education must adjust (Suggestions for the Portuguese context, **mobility** to be foresee):
Generalist Teacher: For Pre-School and Basic Education 1st Cycle (In Higher Sch, of Educ.).
Teacher trained by Area (VAE/Other Subject): For Basic Education 2nd Cycle (").
Teacher in one subject (VAE): For Basic School 3rd Cycle; as well as for Secondary School - here w/ place for a **teacher specialist in some VAE field/technique** (University, Art Faculty-Ed. Branch) . At the present, teachers make 4-5 ys Licence in Art + 1-2ys Teacher Ed. at the Education Faculty, as paid In-Service Teachers in Schools, the Ed. Branch being discussed.

Portuguese research (M Ed/PRODEP-DAPP, 1999) through case study and statistic analysis, accomplished by specialists in Education, Economy and Social Studies, revealed some **trends for the years 2000-2005 (2020):**
World trends: Globalisation, Transition to the *knowledge society* and network organization (M Ed/PRODEP-DAPP, 1999/Pedro, E.)
It is a must to catch the highest **technological values** and master the following **cross-skills**: Communication, citizenship, accountability, globalisation sense, connectivity (in the cyberspace) and scientific technological culture (maths based); with the **requirement** of territory qualification and the **priorities** of international partnerships, for a *learning society* and with help to Family (M Ed/PRODEP-DAPP, 1999/Rodrigues, M. J.). Governments must become facilitators and train elites for the **new skills**: creativity, integration, participation, flexibility, communication and personal relationship (M Ed/PRODEP-DAPP, 1999/Costa, C.). The risk of **info-exclusion** by a new illiteracy, or of a **technological colonization**, needs to be considered (M Ed/PRODEP-DAPP, 1999/Silva, A. S.). This points out another challenge.

CHALLENGE 8: Prevention of exclusion of minority cultures from the global society
The access and mastery of the global society's technologies to and by the minority cultures is a condition of their integration in the global society and reaching high working standards. Up to what point should some practices becoming out of date in nowadays life be mantained - for their cultural heritage or (tourism/crafts) commercial value?
On the other side, what ought *civilized* cultures learn from some minority cultures, in a true society of shared learning? We were able to receive, at this Congress Opening Ceremony, the Aboriginal lesson of survival competences, listening and touching mastery, body expression in harmony /respect/intimacy with nature... I am thankful for the Christine Grubb's Aboriginal tile design in the cover of my Congress Programme and its aesthetic/evocational quality, communicating observation, strength, order, (earth) colour, tenderness and delicate touch, tradition/generations respect: a work made meaningful for nowadays quality of life.

CHALLENGE 9: Fair orientation of pupils' art word within a context of cultural diversity
Our presentation to the Research Conference tackled this problem, searching for a referential helpful for teaher's instant valuation facing a class or final evaluation of pupils' work. We came to the conclusion thar no *one and always adequate* evaluation frameworrk exists; to cope with pupils diversity of experiences, a new evaluation framework has to be buit aplying to the typology of each new work (process/product).
Nevertheless, **great convergence about the nature of the pupil's growth to be fostered and assessed through the work**, appears to emerge, beyond the subjectivity so frequently attributed to such an evaluation: in a scale of 100 points, in about 65% of the 160 In-service Teachers-in-Education at our 1995-99 *VAE Didactic* classes, the variation of relative weight attributed to the work outcomes (**to know + to do + to be** (imagination/criticism + values/attitudes = **to live**) stayed less or equal to 10 points in each of the four operationalized aspects

And never upper 20 points in the remaining 35%.An advisable way to adjust such an evaluation to each situation has proved to be the **discussion among peers** – either among evaluaters-teachers or among authors-pupils engaging themselves in self-hetero evaluation, We have a content analysis of some of these In-service Teachers-in-Education's discussions in progress; and we believe that they may reveal the **underlying individual an cultural/social referentials** at work in the procedure of orientation of pupils' work - and, may be, if they evolve along peer's discussions, showing usefulness in reflexive/active Teacher Education.

The **variables at the present cultural** (& VAE) **transition** are:
Out of our control - globalisation. Under our control - The educational system (multicultural policies; autonomy and exclusion ethic concerns, pluralization of forms of excelence, in rationality, art, etc; team teachers' reflection/action/research, essential both in initial and continuous Teacher Education (adapted Ed/PRODEP-DAPP, 1999/Silva, A.S).
Personal and group skills are:creativity; innovation; coping with the unknown; making the new to come out of the old still relevant; criticism of the information; *pleasurable* learning among peers; *beefsteak* instead of *sacrifice*; interactivity and school made bigger through the cyberspace; students' accountable decision; generations integration; female traces of sensitiveness and emotional intelligence vs. male stength; the soft and relational behaviour. (M Ed/PRODEP-DAPP, 1999/Marques, R.)

The VAE Teacher neads to engage himself in the transition of aesthetics/ethics/mediation/ social values... *to give sense to the unknown* with imagination... As in Lévy, P, (1994): *To give sense to the extraordinary technical transformation of this end of the century, this is the part of freedom left to us*. In conclusion, we propose to the InSEA World Council the following:

InSEA Recommendations on Aesthetic Basic Education

In order to evaluate the known and to cope with the unknown; imagine and built personal and social projects of a better quality of life, in free symbolic expression, at work and in leisure, in nowadays global society:

-All persons must have a systematic aesthetic education to the end of their basic education, when the adolescent's capacity of autonomous criticism has been reached.
-Visual education (art/design/crafts/multimedia...) must be guaranteed a relevant place in aesthetic education, the visual perception accounting for 75%+ of the information; and music /dance/drama must also be a part of it.
-Technological literacy must integrate aesthetic education, appropriately to its integra--ted approaches, interdisciplinarity and disciplines – according to the ages at school – as a condition to avoid global exclusion.

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